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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A process for converting sulfur compounds in a hydrocarbon stream comprising:

mixing a hydrocarbon stream and an alkaline stream;

feeding [[a]] said hydrocarbon stream previously mixed with said alkaline stream to a prewash section containing alkali to convert hydrogen sulfide to a sulfide salt; continuously withdrawing a spent alkaline stream containing mercaptides from said prewash section;

recirculating at least a part of said spent alkaline stream to be mixed with said hydrocarbon stream;

continuously adding a regenerated alkaline stream to said prewash section; withdrawing a prewashed hydrocarbon stream from said prewash section; and feeding said prewashed hydrocarbon stream to an extractor section discrete from said prewash section, said extractor section containing alkali.

Claim 2 (original): The process of claim 1 wherein a part of said spent alkaline stream is recirculated to said prewash section and another part of said spent alkaline stream is removed from said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 3 (original): The process of claim 2 wherein said regenerated alkaline stream is added to said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 4 (original): The process of claim 2 wherein water is added to said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 5 (original): The process of claim 2 wherein said hydrocarbon stream is fed to said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 6 (original): The process of claim 5 wherein said spent alkaline stream with the hydrocarbon stream added thereto undergoes a pressure drop before feeding to the prewash section.

Claim 7 (original): The process of claim 1 wherein said extractor section has a greater concentration of alkali than said prewash section.

Claim 8 (original): The process of claim 1 wherein said alkali is caustic.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A process for converting sulfur compounds in a hydrocarbon stream comprising:

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mixing a hydrocarbon stream and a recycled alkaline stream;
feeding [[a]] said hydrocarbon stream previously mixed with said alkaline stream to
a prewash section containing alkali to convert hydrogen sulfide to a sulfide salt;
withdrawing hydrocarbons from said prewash section;
withdrawing a recycle alkaline stream containing the sulfide salt from said prewash
section;
withdrawing a spent alkaline stream containing the sulfide salt from said recycle
alkaline stream;
adding a regenerated alkaline stream, containing a lower concentration of sulfide
salt than said spent alkaline stream, to said recycle alkaline stream; and
recycling said recycle alkaline stream to said prewash section.

Claim 10 (original): The process of claim 9 wherein said hydrocarbon stream is
added to said recycle alkaline stream.

Claim 11 (original): The process of claim 9 wherein water is added to said recycle
alkaline stream.

Claim 12 (original): The process of claim 10 wherein the recycle alkaline stream
undergoes a pressure drop after the hydrocarbon stream is added thereto.

Claim 13 (original): The process of claim 9 wherein the alkali is caustic.

Claims 14-20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (new): A process for converting sulfur compounds in a hydrocarbon
stream comprising:
mixing a hydrocarbon stream and an alkaline stream in a line to a prewash section;
feeding said hydrocarbon stream and said alkaline stream in said line to a prewash
section to convert hydrogen sulfide to a sulfide salt;
continuously withdrawing a spent alkaline stream containing mercaptides from said
prewash section;
continuously adding said alkaline stream to said prewash section;
withdrawing a prewashed hydrocarbon stream from said prewash section; and
feeding said prewashed hydrocarbon stream to an extractor section discrete from
said prewash section, said extractor section containing alkali.

Claim 22 (new): The process of claim 21 wherein a part of said spent alkaline
stream is recirculated to said prewash section and another part of said spent alkaline stream
is removed from said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 23 (new): The process of claim 21 wherein said alkaline stream is added to
said spent alkaline stream.

Claim 24 (new): The process of claim 22 wherein water is added to said spent
alkaline stream.

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Claim 25 (new): The process of claim 22 wherein said alkaline stream is a regenerated alkaline stream.

Claim 26 (new): The process of claim 25 wherein said spent alkaline stream with the hydrocarbon stream added thereto undergoes a pressure drop before feeding to the prewash section.

Claim 27 (new): The process of claim 21 wherein said extractor section has a greater concentration of alkali than said prewash section.